



State of Maryland Executive Department

Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lieutenant Governor

Arlene F. Lee
Executive Director

Zika Information

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zika virus is chiefly spread through mosquito bites from the *Aedes* species of mosquito, though it can also be passed from a pregnant woman to her fetus, and through sexual contact and blood transfusions. The virus poses a significant threat to pregnant women because it has been linked to birth defects, including a condition known as microcephaly, and other severe brain defects.

The best way to prevent Zika virus is to prevent mosquito bites. **Parents should take steps to help their children avoid mosquito bites, and make sure that those who care for their children do so as well.** If you have a baby or child, or care for one, please be sure to follow these [guidelines from the CDC](#):

- Do not use insect repellent on babies younger than 2 months of age.
- Dress your child in clothing that covers arms and legs, or
- Cover crib, stroller, and baby carrier with mosquito netting.
- Do not apply insect repellent onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, and cut or irritated skin.
- Adults: Spray insect repellent onto your hands and then apply to a child's face.

For information on which insect repellants are best for your child, and additional instructions for children and pregnant women, please see <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you> and <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/avoid-bug-bites>. When used as directed, EPA-registered insect repellents are safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Marylanders of all ages should wear long, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing; apply insect repellents according to product labels; avoid mosquito-infested areas during prime periods of activity (early and late in the day and at night in well-lit areas); and install, inspect, and repair window and door screens in homes and stables.

It is very important to note that *Aedes* mosquitoes breed in containers of standing water, so lawn furniture, drain pipes, flower pots, children's toys, and other common household items can quickly become mosquito breeding grounds. Marylanders should make an effort to survey their property now and drain or eliminate anything where water can pool.

Please be sure to read [Governor Hogan's press release](#) in its entirety for more information on Zika and tips on how to protect yourself and your children. Please also check out the following resources:

- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Zika website](#)
- [Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Zika website](#)
- [Maryland Department of Agriculture's Zika website](#)